

Castlemaine Naturalist

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Blue-beard Caladenia at the Monk

Photo Noel Young

Wild flower walk 3 -The Monk, Wednesday 30/9/09

Rita Mills

As usual, on the Wednesday Wildflower Walk to the Monk we found Billy Buttons and Tall Sundews everywhere. It always seems to be the place to find lots of them. There were a few Castlemaine Spider Orchids, and the little plant of *Platylobium formosum*, the Handsome Flat-pea, which is at the bend in the path, yielded its one or two flowers to be admired again, even if the rest had finished flowering. A pleasant surprise further up the track was a lone specimen of the Blue-beard Caledenia, *Pheladenia deformis*.

There was a good roll up again, and all enjoyed both the wildflowers and the pleasant evening.

Flowering species - general List by Noel Young

<i>Caladenia carneae</i>	Pink Fingers
<i>Caladenia clavescens</i>	Castlemaine Spider-orchid
<i>Caladenia dilatata</i>	Greencomb Spider-orchid
<i>Glossodia major</i>	Wax-lip Orchid
<i>Hypoxis vaginalis</i>	Yellow star
<i>Pheladenia deformis.</i>	Blue-beard Caledenia
<i>Wurmbea dioica</i>	Early Nancy
<i>Acacia acinacea</i>	Gold-dust Wattle
<i>Craspedia variabilis</i>	Billy Buttons
<i>Daviesia ulicifolia</i>	Gorse Bitter-pea
<i>Drosera peltata</i>	Tall Sundew
<i>Drosera whittakeri</i>	Scented Sundew
<i>Grevillea alpina</i>	Downy Grevillea

<i>Microseris aff. lanceolata</i>	Yam Daisy
<i>Ozothamnus obcordatus</i>	Grey Everlasting
<i>Pimelia linifolia</i>	Slender Rice-flower
<i>Rhytidosporum procumbens</i>	White Marianth
<i>Senecio sp</i>	Fireweed
<i>Stackhousia monogyna</i>	Candles
<i>Tetratheca ciliata</i>	Pink Bells
<i>Xerochrysum viscosum</i>	Sticky Everlasting

Wild flower walk Kalimna 7/10/09

Natalie de Maccus

Our fourth and final Wild Flower Walk for 2009 was to Kalimna. This site was chosen because the area adjacent to it (and possibly the area itself) was ear-marked by D.S.E. for burning in the current season.

Under the expert eye of Frances Cincotta we walked the loop track. We



A rare bi-coloured *Glossodia major*
– photo Noel Young

saw many flower specimens - a total of 34. For me the highlight was Rough Mint-bush (*Prostanthera denticulata*) - an absolute treat. I have not seen it in flower in any other location. The prize for the strangest plant would have to go to the bi-coloured Wax-lip Orchid (*Glossodia major*). We had seen a couple of pure white ones at The Monk, but this one had pale mauve petals which were bordered with white.

Other plants in flower were: Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia stricta*), Pink Bells (*Tetratheca ciliata*), Yam Daisy (*Microseris sp*), Downy Grevillea (*Grevillea alpina*), Twining Fringe-lily (*Thysanotus patersonii*), Fairy Wax-flower (*Philotrichum verrucosa*), Smooth Rice-flower (*Pimelia linifolia*), Leopard Orchid (*Diuris pardina*), Sundew (*Drosera sp*), Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*), Grey Everlasting (*Ozothamnus obcordatus*), Gorse Bitter-pea (*Daviesia ulicifolia*), Pink Fingers (*Caladenia carneae*), Hedge Wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*), Rough Wattle (*A. aspera*), Billy Buttons (*Craspedia sp*), Sticky Everlasting (*Xerochrysum viscosum*), Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea (*Daviesia leptophylla*), Many-flowered Mat-rush (*Lomandra multiflora*), Black-anther Flax-lily (*Dianella admixta*), Raspwort (*Haloragis sp*), Urn Heath (*Melichrus urceolatus*), Hood Orchid (*Caladenia cucullata*), Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*), Austral Carrot (*Dauus*

glochidiatus), Primrose Goodenia (*Goodenia blackiana*), Greencomb Spider-orchid (*Caladenia dilatata s.l.*), Purple Coral-pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*), Common Fringe-myrtle (*Calytrix tetragona*), Fireweed (*Senecio sp*), Daphne Heath (*Brachyloma daphnoides*), Red Box (*Eucalyptus polyanthemos*)

Rare Orchid Search 10/10/09

Denis Hurley

Following a previous field trip on Sunday 4th October, another group of hopefuls met at the Octopus for our usual Saturday afternoon field trip, including a visitor from Bendigo FNC.

After car pooling, we travelled to Maldon to join Parks Victoria officers Terri Williams and Noel Muller at the Beehive car park. After introductions and instruction on safety issues we headed off to a known site of two rare *Pterostylis* orchids in the Nuggetty Ranges. Although not at their best stage, some carefully protected specimens showed us what we were searching for – there were some examples of the Sutton Grange Greenhood *Pterostylis* sp affin *bicolor*, (not well developed), and a few still emerging examples of the rarer *P biseta*.

We split into two groups, Terri taking some to private land on the NE side of Mt. Tarrengower, and Noel taking the rest of us to the southern side of Anzac Hill near Victory Hill (the latter marked out with a huge V in white painted rocks) We wandered around (carefully) on this area of sloping hillside largely bared by foraging rabbits. No plants of interest turned up, so the party moved 3 or 4 hundred metres up the slope, where Noel Muller discovered a few very small examples of what we were searching for, some nibbled off, but one or two had recognisable heads. Being poor specimens, we were not sure if they were bicolor or biseta, but appeared to be the former. The spot was logged for future reference.

On the opposite side of the track to where the diminutive and well grazed *Pterostylis* was found, a good number of Golden Moth orchids *Diuris lanceolata* were growing in a shallow gully close to a large clump of Blackberry which showed evidence of being a rabbit haven. Here there were also several small sun orchid sp. not yet open, so could not be named.

Calling it quits at 4.30 we headed back to the Maldon information centre where we had agreed to meet up for a cuppa and chat before heading for home. A quick detour down the Gower track to see some Slender Sun orchids *Thelymitra pauciflora* completed the afternoon. This bush area is

a colourful living example of what the degraded and bare hills we had walked on previously, could once have been.

Rare Orchid Search – part 2

Geraldine Harris

Our group went onto private land behind Mt. Tarrengower. We passed by the grave of a young girl who was found dead in the 1840s when her father left her alone while he went to find his bullocks that had been frightened off by a storm. We had magnificent views of the surrounding country from the boulders on top of the hill but native vegetation was sparse and Wheel Cactus very common.



Pultenaea platyphylla – ph Geraldine Harris

We did find some Fairy Martin nests under an overhanging boulder, Rock Isotomes (*Isotoma axillaris*), Tiny Stars (*Hypoxis glabella*), some large Lightwood (*Acacia implexa*) trees, Rock Correas (*Correa glabra*), Hop Bushes (*Dodonea viscosa*) and a couple of *Pultenaea* plants in full bloom that I later identified as the Flatleaf Bush-pea *Pultenaea platyphylla* – a new sighting for me.

We also watched as a group of about ten kangaroos went round and round the boulders below in single file making growling and clicking sounds all the while with a medium sized animal leading the way. After minutes of chasing round and round below us they came to a halt and two of the larger males began to fight until one eventually retreated in defeat. We had been watching some sort of competition for mating rights.

But definitely not an *Pterostylis biseta* or *bicolor* to be seen!

A reminder that the annual **Bird Challenge Count**

will be held on the weekend of December 5/6 -

contact Chris Morris if you would like to participate in a team for a day



ABOVE: A caged *Pterostylis biseta* with head still emerging, at Nuggety Hills, Maldon

LEFT: *Pterostylis* sp. aff *bicolor* at Sutton Grange

LOWER LEFT: Slender Sun-orchids on the Gower track

LOWER RIGHT: Greencomb Spider-orchid at the Monk Hill

photos by Noel Young



Sutton Grange Orchid at Pilchers Bridge

Rita Mills

Only three of us were able to go to Tamsin Byrne's property on the morning of Monday October 19, which was a pity, because the property is a delight. Tamsin and her neighbour took us for a stroll lasting about 1½ hours, first down onto the flat past a huge old Red Box, to where there were a few rather small specimens of the orchid, and one Adders Tongue, a tiny, very un-fern-like fern. There were several other pairs of leaves, but only one fruiting body. There were lots of tiny plants such as Rayless Daisies and Cudweed - we needed our "tiny plants expert"- and as we walked off the flat and up the hill against the forest we found

Common Rice-flower *Pimelea humilis*, Luzula, Twining Fringe Lilies, Milkmaids, Cats Ear, Daphne Heath, Sweet Hounds-tongue, Early (or Late??) Nancies, Variable Plantain, Yam Daisies, Pale Sundews, Tall Sundews, Chocolate Lilies, and Nodding Vanilla Lilies, which caused much discussion and looking up of books around the lunch table.



The giant Red Box tree

- photo Noel Young

As we walked on back down to the road and towards the house past the 6? year old plantings, Tamsin guided us up the rise near the house, and there were scores of Sutton Grange Orchids in flower, not little things like the ones on the rather dry flat, either, but specimens up to about 5 or 6 cm high. Cameras were very busy. What intrigued me were the Hundreds and Thousands, the tiny trigger plants, *Levenhookia dubia*, the Hairy Stylewort - I prefer Hundreds and Thousands! - that were growing amongst the orchids and grass in that area.

There was also quite a number of birds, Grey Fantail, Rufous Whistler, New Holland Honeyeaters, Kookaburra, Choughs, Red Wattlebirds, Grey Thrush, Eastern and Crimson Rosellas, Spotted Pardalote, Superb Blue Wrens and Brown Headed Honeyeaters that I managed to identify.

On the way home we stopped, as Tamsin had recommended, at the Memorial at Sutton Grange, and found more Sutton Grange Orchids, plus Running Postman and Bulbine Lilies. A perfect end to our trip.

Observations

- ◆ Maroonhood orchids found between Fryers ridge road and Taradale on the FOBIF walk Sunday 20th September [Fig 1] – Noel Young
- ◆ Geraldine Harris had a young Koala in a tree near the house
- ◆ Denis Hurley found a white wax-lip orchid and clumps of blue Sun-orchids on the Gower track
- ◆ Gary Gibson has a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles nesting at Sandon
- ◆ Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes have arrived, orchids prolific along Muckleford railway line, mass of Matted Bush-pea at Huntly clay pits - Rita Mills
- ◆ We have 4 types of Sun-orchid in flower in the bush here at present - Thelymitra pauciflora (Slender), ixioides (Spotted), megcalyptra (Scented) and rubra (Salmon) - Geraldine Harris
- ◆ Bill Chapman reported sighting a pair (male and female) of Regent Honeyeaters at Edington around mid October - Rita Mills
- ◆ A male Powerful Owl found roosting in the Botanical Gardens 29th Oct to 3rd Nov [Fig 2] and Grey Teal with 8 new chicks on L. Joanna - Noel Young



Fig. 1 Maroonhood orchid
Pterostylis pedunculata near Fryers ridge
– unusual for this area



Fig. 2 A male Powerful Owl
demonstrating his rubbery neck in the Botanical
Gardens - photos by Noel Young

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Programme

November 2009

Fri Nov 13th meeting: DR MARY COLE: Mycorrhizae and Environmental Health

Sat Nov 14th field trip: Muckleford railway line

Sat/Sun Dec 5/6: Annual bird count see notice p.4

Fri Dec 11th meeting: Members night - Members' "show and tell". Share a few photos, a nature experience, a poem – be as creative as you like. Slide and digital projectors available for use (powerpoint or jpegs on either CD or USB key) UCA hall 8pm. Bring a plate or supper to share.

Sat Dec 12th Christmas outing: Location to be advised

VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB ACTIVITIES

General meetings - (second Friday of each month, except January) are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) Hall (enter from Lyttleton St.) at 8.00 pm.

Field Trips - (Saturday following the general meeting) leave from the car park opposite Castle Motel, Duke Street at 1.30pm sharp unless stated otherwise. BYO morning and/or afternoon tea. Outdoor excursions are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions. There are NO excursions on total fire ban days.

Business meetings - fourth Thursday of each month, except December, at Natalies; 65 Johnstone Street, at 7.30 pm. All members are invited to attend.

Subscriptions for 2009

Ordinary membership: Single \$27, Family \$35

Pensioner or student: Single \$24, Family \$29

Subscription includes postage of the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist

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